



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. III-04-038

June 16, 2004

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NRC TO DISCUSS PERRY INSPECTION FINDINGS WITH FIRSTENERGY OFFICIALS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet Monday in Painesville, Ohio, with representatives of FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company to discuss the preliminary findings of an NRC team inspection reviewing the causes and corrective actions for several equipment problems that have occurred over the past 18 months at the Perry Nuclear Power Station. The plant is located in Perry, Ohio.

The meeting will be at 4 p.m. at the Quail Hollow Resort, 11080 Concord-Hambden Road, Painesville. The public is invited to observe the meeting, and NRC officials will be available before the conclusion of the meeting to answer questions from the public. The four-member team inspection took place during the weeks of May 17 and June 7.

The inspection team has focused on the utility's response to three equipment problems: the failure of an equipment cooling water pump on September 1 of last year; an air buildup in piping that affected the operation of another pump during the August 18 blackout; and the failure of a high pressure core spray pump during testing in October 2002.

Each of these equipment problems was determined to be of low to moderate safety significance -- "white" inspection findings in the NRC classification of problems which ranges from "green," for findings of minor safety significance, through "white," "yellow," and "red," indicating increasing safety significance.

"This inspection was scheduled because of the number of "white" findings involving equipment failures," said James Caldwell, NRC Regional Administrator. "The inspectors have been looking at how well FirstEnergy finds, evaluates, and fixes equipment problems. What we learn in the inspection will determine whether or not we need to conduct further inspections looking at the effectiveness of their corrective actions."

During the inspection, the pump, which had failed on September 1, failed again during testing on May 21. The NRC conducted a separate special inspection to review this repetitive pump failure. While the meeting Monday will focus on the team inspection looking more broadly at equipment issues, the results of the inspection of the May 21 pump problem will also be discussed.

The report of the team inspection will be available in about 30 days from the NRC Region III Office of Public Affairs and in the NRC's ADAMS online library at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html> - use docket number 05000440 to facilitate locating the report.

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